

### C. Remarks

The claims are 1-13 and 16-20, with claim 1 being the sole independent claim. Claims 14 and 15 have been cancelled, with the subject matter of claim 15 being incorporated into independent claim 1. In addition, claims 1, 3-5, 10 and 12 have been amended to correct informalities; no new matter has been added. Reconsideration of the claims is respectfully requested in light of the following remarks.

At the outset, Applicant would like to thank the Examiner for the time and consideration extended during the interview of March 4, 2004. In addition, Applicant notes with appreciation the Examiner's indication that claims 10-13 and 15 are directed to allowable subject matter.

Claim 3 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph. In light of Applicant's amendment of claims 1 and 3 to address the Examiner's concern, Applicant submits that the rejection is now moot and should be withdrawn.

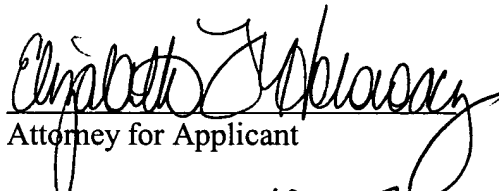
Claims 1, 2, 4-9, 14 and 16-20 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being obvious over Burger ("Regiospecific Reactions with  $\omega$ -carboxy- $\alpha$ -amino acids -- A Simple Synthesis of Aspartame", *Chemmiker Zeitlung*, 1990, 114(7-8), pp. 249-251) and further in view of Claude (U.S. Patent No. 5,510,508). While Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection, Applicant has now amended sole independent claim 1 to include the subject matter of allowable claim 15 in an effort to expedite prosecution in this case. Applicant reserves all rights to pursue the invention as set forth prior to this amendment in a divisional application. In any event, Applicant submits that the §103 rejection of claims 1, 2, 4-9, 14 and 16-20 is now moot and should be withdrawn.

This Amendment After Final Rejection is believed clearly to place this application in condition for allowance. Its entry is therefore believed proper under 37

C.F.R. §1.116. Accordingly, entry of this Amendment After Final Rejection, as an earnest attempt to advance prosecution, is respectfully requested. Should the Examiner believe that issues remain outstanding, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact Applicants' undersigned attorney in an effort to resolve such issues and advance the case to issue.

Applicant's undersigned attorney may be reached in our New York office by telephone at (212) 218-2100. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below listed address.

Respectfully submitted,

  
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